

PENROD



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(Continued.)

"And a few minutes later he added, 'And I think I know the place to do it.'"

Again the faithful voice of Duke was heard pleading outside the bolted door.

Penrod entered the schoolroom Monday morning picturesquely leaning upon a cane, shortened to support a cripple approaching the age of twelve. He asked about twenty minutes late, limping deeply, his brave young mouth drawn with pain, and the sensation he created must have been a solace to him, the only possible criticism of this entrance being that it was just a shade too heroic. Perhaps for that reason it failed to stagger Miss Spence, a woman so saturated with suspicion that she penalized Penrod for tardiness as promptly and as solidly as it had been a mere, ordinary, unimpaired boy. Nor would she entertain any discussion of the justice of her ruling. It seemed almost that she feared to argue with him.

However, the distinction of cane and limp remained to him, consolations which he protracted far into the week—until Thursday evening, in fact, when Mr. Schofield, observing from a window his son's pursuit of Duke round and round the back yard, confiscated the cane, with the promise that it should not remain late if he saw Penrod limping again. Thus, succeeding a depressing Friday, another Saturday brought the necessity for new inventions.

It was a scented morning in apple blossom time. "What time?" ten of the clock Penrod emerged hastily from the kitchen door. His pockets bulged abnormally, so did his cheeks, and he swallowed with difficulty. A threatening mop, wielded by a cockle-eyed man in a checkered sleeve, followed him through the door, and he was preceded by a small, hurried, wistful dog with a warm doughnut in his mouth. The kitchen door slammed petulantly, enclosing the sore voice of Della, whereupon Penrod and Duke seated themselves upon the pleasant sward and immediately consumed the spoils of their raid.

From the cross street which formed the side boundary of the Schofield's ample yard came a jingle of harness and the cadenced clatter of a pair of trotting horses, and Penrod, looking up, beheld the passing of a fat acquaintance, torpid amid the conservative splendors of a rather old-fashioned victoria. This was Roderick Magworth Bitts, Jr., a fellow sufferer at the Friday afternoon dancing class, but otherwise not often a companion; a home sheltered lad, tutored privately and preserved against the coarsening influences of rude comradeship and miscellaneous information. Heavily overgrown in all physical dimensions, virtuous and placid, this cloistered nut was wholly uninteresting to Penrod Schofield. Nevertheless, Roderick Magworth Bitts, Jr., was a personage on account of the importance of the Magworth Bitts family, and it was Penrod's destiny to increase Roderick's celebrity far, beyond its present aristocratic limitations.

The Magworth Bittses were important because they were impressive. There was no other reason. And they were impressive because they believed themselves important. The address of the family were impressively formal. They dressed with reticent elegance and wore the same nose and the same expression—an expression which indicated that they knew something exquisite and sacred which other people could never know. Other people in their presence were apt to feel mysteriously ignoble and to become secretly uneasy about ancestors, gloves and pronunciation. The Magworth Bitts manner was withholding and reserved, though sometimes gracious, granting small smiles as great favors and giving off a chilling kind of precousness. Naturally when any citizen of the community did anything unconventional or improper or made a mistake or had a relative who went wrong that citizen's first and worst fear was that the Magworth Bittses would hear of it. In fact, this painful family had for years terrorized the community, though the community had never realized that it was terrorized and invariably spoke of the family as the "most charming circle in town." By common consent Mrs. Roderick Magworth Bitts officiated as the supreme model as well as critic in chief of morals and deportment for all the unlucky people prosperous enough to be elevated to her acquaintance.

Magworth was the important part of the name. Mrs. Roderick Magworth Bitts was a Magworth born herself, and the Magworth crest decorated not only Mrs. Magworth Bitts' note paper, but was on the china, on the table linen, on the chimney pieces, on the opaque glass of the front door, on the victrola and on the harness, though omitted from the garden hose and the lawn mower.

Naturally no sensible person dreamed of connecting that illustrious crest with the unfortunate and notorious Rens Magworth, whose name had grown week by week into larger and

larger type upon the front pages of newspapers owing to the gradually increasing public and official belief that she had poisoned a family of eight. However, the statement that no sensible person could have connected the Magworth Bitts family with the arse-nical Rens takes no account of Penrod Schofield.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Two Families.

PENROD never missed a murder, a hanging or an electrocution in the newspapers. He knew almost as much about Rens Magworth as her juryman did, though they sat in a courtroom 200 miles away, and he had it in mind—so frank he was—to ask Roderick Magworth Bitts, Jr., if the murderess happened to be a relative.

The present encounter, being merely one of apathetic greeting, did not afford the opportunity. Penrod took off his cap, and Roderick, seated between his mother and one of his grownup sisters, nodded sluggishly, but neither Mrs. Magworth Bitts nor her daughter acknowledged the salutation of the boy in the yard. They disappeared of him as a person of little consequence, and that little bad. Snubbed, Penrod thoughtfully restored his cap to his head. A boy can be cut as effectually as a man, and this one was chilled to a low temperature. He wondered if they despised him because they had seen a last fragment of doughnut in his hand; then he thought that perhaps it was Duke who had disgraced him. Duke was certainly no fashionable looking dog.

The resilient spirits of youth, however, presently revived, and, discovering a spider upon one knee and a beetle simultaneously upon the other, Penrod forgot Mrs. Roderick Magworth Bitts in the course of some experiments infringing upon the domain of Dr. Carrel. Penrod's efforts, with the aid of a pin, to effect a transference of living organisms were unsuccessful, but he convinced himself forever that a spider cannot walk with a beetle's legs. Della then enhanced zoological interest by depositing upon the back porch a large rat trap from the cellar, the prison of four live rats awaiting execution.

Penrod at once took possession, referring to the empty stable, where he installed the rats in a small wooden box with a sheet of broken window glass, held down by a brickbat, over the top. Thus the symptoms of their agitation when the box was shaken or hammered upon could be studied at leisure. Altogether this Saturday was starting splendidly.

After a time the student's attention was withdrawn from his specimens by a peculiar smell, which, being followed up by a system of selective sniffing, proved to be an emanation leaking into the stable from the alley. He opened the back door.

Across the alley was a cottage which a thrifty neighbor had built on the rear line of his lot and rented to negroes, and the fact that a negro family was now in process of "moving in" was manifested by the presence of a thin mule and a ramshackle wagon, the latter laden with the semblance of a stove and a few other unpretentious household articles.

A very small darky boy stood near the mule. In his hand was a rusty chain, and at the end of the chain the delighted Penrod perceived the source of the special smell he was tracing—a large raccoon. Duke, who had shown not the slightest interest in the rats, set up a frantic barking and stimulated a scolding assault upon the strange animal. It was only a bit of acting, however, for Duke was an old dog, had suffered much and desired no unnecessary sorrow, wherefore he confined his demonstrations to alarms and exursions and presently sat down at a distance and expressed himself by intermittent threatenings in a quavering falsetto.

"What's that coon's name?" asked Penrod, intending no discourtesy.

"Aim gomme name," said the small darky.

"What?"

"Aim gomme name."

"What?"

The small darky looked annoyed.

"Aim gomme name, I tell you," he said impatiently.

Penrod conceived that insult was intended.

"What's the matter of you?" he demanded, advancing. "You get fresh with me and I'll—"

"Hyah, white boy!" A colored youth of Penrod's own age appeared in the doorway of the cottage. "You let that brotuh mule alone. He ain' do nothin' to you."

"Well, why can't he answer?"

"He can't. He can't talk no better'n what he was talkin'. He tongue tie."

"Oh!" said Penrod, mollified; then, obeying an impulse so universally crowded in the human breast under like circumstances that it has become a quip, he turned to the afflicted one.

"Talk to me," he begged eagerly.

(To Be Continued.)

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FAIRFIELD COUNTY NEWS

Killed by Train.

Pietro-Delinoi, a Norwalk laborer, was instantly killed Monday at Mamamoneck when he was struck by a freight train. De Linoli was working with other laborers on the tracks and did not get out of the way fast enough.

Miss Emma Frances Byrbee, aged about 70 years, of Norwalk, was instantly killed Monday night by the south-bound Pittsfield express. Opinions differ as to whether it was a case of suicide or an accident.

Miss Byrbee had been ill for the past six years and during the past several months had been mentally afflicted at times.

"Little School in Woods."

The Little School in the Woods of Greenwich has organized for the purpose of conducting an educational institution, etc. The amount of capital stock authorized as \$25,000, divided into 250 shares, par value \$100. The amount of capital stock with which the corporation will begin business is \$1,000. The incorporators are: Bernard Sexton, Lotus S. Dudley and Charles D. Burnes.

Greenwich Savings Bank.

At the annual meeting of the Greenwich Savings Bank, Willis H. Wilcox was re-elected president, and the old board of trustees were re-elected. The treasurer's report showed amount of real estate loans, \$67,933; real estate by foreclosure, \$12,000; personal loans, \$2,080. St. Louis & Iron Mountain Bonds, \$7,615; cash on hand and in banks, \$36,358. The income at the bank at the present time is about \$700 per month, against which the expense account is very small. It is believed that within a few weeks another dividend will be paid to all book-holders. Thus far \$2 per cent has been paid. It has been found difficult to disburse of the real estate and the outstanding mortgages and for this reason the trustees voted to start foreclosure proceedings against all mortgagors who fail to pay the principal and interest before Oct. 1.

Rev. Mr. Seabee Resigns.

Rev. Garfield J. Seabee, pastor of the Grace Baptist church, has resigned his charge and is now awaiting for letters of recommendation before leaving Norwalk for other fields.

Death From Exposure.

John Roach, for the past few years a charge of the town of Bethel, died Tuesday at his home in Norwalk, aged 45 years. He was about 5 feet 6 inches tall. A few weeks ago Mr. Roach wandered off and was found two days later in an exhausted condition on the Ridgefield road. His condition was critical at that time, as he had been more than 48 hours without food and had walked several miles, when he fell by the roadside and laid there until discovered some two days later.

Mrs. Bardos Dead.

Mrs. Susie Bardos, aged 70 years, who was found in the mouth of Five Mile River last Thursday evening, died Wednesday afternoon at the Norwalk hospital. Shortly after being taken to the hospital she developed pneumonia, which was one of the causes of death.

Crushed Under Wagon.

Joseph Leonetti, employed as laborer by John McNally of Stamford, was found dead beneath a wagon of Mr. McNally, Tuesday. The wagon apparently had passed over his body, crushing his ribs and causing internal injuries. He had complained of feeling ill, and it is assumed that, after dumping a load of manure, he lay upon the ground to rest, near a vehicle, fell asleep and was run over, the horses wandering off.

LITCHFIELD COUNTY NEWS.

Insane Patient Returned.

James Brant, who escaped from the state hospital for the insane at Middletown last Saturday night with James Monahan, was brought to Winsted Wednesday by his brother, John Brant of Great Neck, Long Island, at whose home the fugitive appeared a day or two ago. Brant was taken back to Middletown.

Water Co. Wins.

The Torrington Water Company has won a point of importance in its suit for the condemnation of the Slickmud farm on the Goshen road, recently bought by the town and now used as a reservoir for purposes, through the decision of Judge Tice of the superior court, sustaining its demurrer to the defense set up by the town. In effect this decision brushes aside the contention of the town that the sources of the water supply are already contaminated and that the addition of another source of contamination makes no difference and also the contention that the water company should build a reservoir in Hart Hollow from which to draw its entire water supply.

LIVE STOCK MARKET

New York, July 22.—Common to prime steers sold at \$7.75 to \$9.75 per 100 lbs.; extra dry fed steers at \$10.25; oxen at \$6.85 to \$8; bulls at \$5 to \$6.50; a few dry fed at \$8; cows at \$3.25 to \$6.40; calves to extra dry fed at \$7.50; tailends at \$7.00. Dressed beef was 12-1-2 to 15c for city dressed native sides.

Common to choice veals at \$8.50 to \$11.50 per 100 lbs.; culls at \$6.50 to \$8; grassers and skim milk calves at \$5.50; fed and mixed calves at \$8 to \$8. City dressed veals 13 to 17c; country dressed 9 to 14c.

Common to good sheep (ewes) sold at \$3.50 to \$5.50 per 100 lbs.; culls at \$2; common to very choice lambs at \$6.75 to \$8.75; culls at \$5. Dressed mutton 8 to 12-1-2c; dressed lambs at 10 to 15c; a few hogs dressed at 15-1-2c.

Heavy to light hogs sold at \$8 to \$8.35 per 100 lbs.; a few head at \$8.50. Roughs at \$6.50 to \$6.75.

Ex-Miners Develop Into Best Soldiers

Manchester, England, July 23.—From a Manchester officer who has been in France since the beginning of the war, serving with the British staff, the Manchester Guardian has gleaned an interesting view as to the character of the different varieties of British soldier in the test of war. In the opinion of the officer, the best soldiers are the ex-miner. He prefers the miner "because he is strong in the back and used to dangers and explosions; because he can endure cramped positions in the trenches; because his ears are quick, because he is curious about sounds, because he is intelligent. The miner puts two and two together much more quickly than any other class of man."

Minister of Munitions Lloyd George has settled the great strike of coal miners in South Wales.

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